SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY, NANDED

A Doctoral Resume

Emancipation of Women : A Postcolonial Comparative Study of Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Bâ

Submitted for

The Registration of Ph.D. Degree in English

Under the Faculty of Humanities

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1. Introduction :

Transformative feminist writers are known for their belief that men are capable of transformation. This transformation can be achieved by making men change their way of thinking and behavior vis-à-vis the other sex, and for any actual positive change to occur in society, the other sex, which stands for African women, should be included in the process of social transformation. For them, men are not only allies with women but they are also the by-products and victims of the same patriarchal systems of socialization. These patriarchal systems produce patterns of thought which have an important impact on the consciousness of the African man and woman because they are educated and reared in accordance with patriarchal values. African transformative feminists generally present in their works the different structures and networks that discriminate against African women as surmountable and feasible. While sharply criticizing these patriarchal structures and networks, they also represent a positive counter-concept and way to what is being criticized. This alternative, therefore, refers to the process of transformation in which both sexes cooperate to bring positive change in the process of socialization. This particular literature of transformative feminism can also be considered as a feminism of Stiwanism, African Womanism, or even a Snail Sense of Feminism because of their verisimilitude in terms of African feminist ideologies which seek for reconciliation and conciliation between African patriarchal and matriarchal cultural values and attitudes. The works which can best represent this school of African feminism are: Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*(1976) *Joys of Motherhood* (1979) *Double Yoke* (1982) and Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter* (1981). *Scarlet Song* (1986).

2. **Objectives of the Research :**

- To account for the ways that racism, political, economic and cultural effects of colonialism affect non white women in the select novelists.
- To understand the world- view of the authors wish of project and propogate.
- To help feminism to shape from universality to a movement of individual experiences and struggles.
- To creat an othering binary that places them as the primary and the rest of the world as secondary.

3 . Hypothesis :

- Both the women writer present different cultural background having different traditional customs and rituals.
- Buchi Emecheta's approach is that of direct feminist protests and through her novels she aims at bringing about a radical change in African women.
- Mariama Bâ aims at mutual understanding between men and women. Her novels present the reality that women are also equally responsible for the subjugation of other women in the society.
- The women characters in their writings do not reject their commitments, but they exercise their choice in a way they wish to fulfill them.
- The African women writers, who are doubly marginalized, recognize the power of writing as a negotiating tool in the struggle to dictate their own terms.

4 . Scope and Limitations of the Study :

The present study primarily focuses on the novels 1) *The Joys Of Motherhood* 2*) Double Yoke* 3) *The Bride Price* by Buchi Emecheta and 1*) So Long A Letter*

2) *Scarlet Song* by Mariama Bâ barring their all other writings.

5 . Methodology:

The research methodology is based on an analysis of a selection of secondary material, critical and theoretical texts, and a close reading of a selection of novels from among a growing field of black African women writers; Nigerian-born Buchi Emecheta and, for comparison, French-Senegalese, Mariama Bâ.

The MLA Handbook of Research 8th edition will strictly be followed.

6 . Significance of the Study:

The present research work is significant as it sheds light on the two African women writers of different cultural backgrounds. It is through their personal experience of colonialism - as subjects of European colonial rule that the women qualify as post-colonial writers. Relative to English studies the term 'post-colonial' is used to include all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. These women write out of a significant stage of post-colonial literary development - the early phase of post- Independence linking the liberation from colonial rule with the dictates of self-governing regimes.

7 . Tentative Chapter Scheme :

Chapter I : Introduction

Chapter II : A Study of Buchi Emecheta's The *Joys of Motherhood* in the Light of Chandra Talpade Mohanty: A Postcolonial Feminist Theory.

Chapter III : A Study of Buchi Emecheta's *Double Yoke* in the light of the problems in neo-colonial society**.**

Chapter- IV : A Study of Doubly oppressed Women in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price*

Chapter IV : Feminism in Islam: a Critique of Polygamy in Mariama Bâ's Epistolary Novel *So Long a Letter*.

Chapter-V : Silence and Madness: An exploration of theme of female exploitation in *Bâ's Scarlet Song*

Chapter VI : Summing Up.

In the first chapter entitled *Introduction,* an attempt has been made to understand the language policy of the colonizers and its impact on the African writers. The chapter also attempts to study to take into cognizance female literary tradition in Africa, focusing on the real contribution by the female writers, especially Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Bâ. The chapter also discusses in details the Nigerian and Senegalese cultures and the dominant Igbo cultural background of Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta. The chapter further attempts to discuss the biographical details of Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Bâ.

Chapter two entitled *A Study of Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood in the Light of Chandra Talpade Mohanty: A Postcolonial Feminist Theory* presents Mohanty, a prominent contemporary postcolonial feminist's demand for women's solidarity based on the common context of struggle against the hierarchical powers- colonialism, capitalism, racism and patriarchy. This study seeks to examine traces of colonialism, capitalism, racism and

solidarity in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* according to Mohanty's postcolonial feminist theory.

Chapter three entitled *A Study of Buchi Emecheta's Double Yoke in the light of Neo-colonial society*, is dedicated to an examination of the place of African women and, occasionally, of British women. Her novels make clear the fact that the failure to realize their true selves will be disadvantageous for them, however talented or ambitious they may be. In Double Yoke Emecheta has presented the modern Nigerian culture and in a modern culture the condition of women is worst. Not only Nko but most of the girls were exploited by men. Women tried to break the traditional boundaries to create their identity, their world but they failed to create a safe world for them, a world in which women are safe. They wanted to create a 'safe zone' and safety is possible only in the absence of men. Women are exploited at school, at university, at work place etc. Men reduced women using their sex to get their certificates so the power was and is always in the hands of men.

Chapter four entitled, *A Study of Doubly oppressed Women in Buchi Emecheta's The Bride Price* presents a different picture of oppression seen in the African society. The hero and heroine of the piece are parallel figures: each represents oppression, in fact double oppression within the society. If Akunna's double oppression is based on Race and Gender, Chike's is grounded on Race and Caste. The narrative technique employed by Emecheta configures the development and rebellion of these oppressed entities and their final effort for freedom. Here the subaltern group in the novel achieves a marginal space of selfhood and independence. As a product of African culture, Akunna's marriage is symbolic in that it is a ceremonial climax of her rebellion against entrenched sexual roles and other social customs which she perceived as limiting and demeaning.

Chapter five entitled *Feminism in Islam: a Critique of Polygamy in Mariama Bâ's Epistolary Novel So Long a Letter,* calls for an understanding of feminism in Islam as a unique approach to feminism with potential contributions to world feminism. The chapter analyzes Mariama Bâ's epistolary novel *So Long a Letter* within the context of a feminist approach in Islam. The primary focus is Bâ's critique of polygamy and her celebration of female bonding in the face of male oppression. Bâ explores her themes through an epistolary exchange between two intimate friends who both suffered the abuse of their polygamous husbands and highlights the contrasting reactions of the two women in regard to the mistreatment by their husbands. Within a distorted misinterpretation of religion, the analysis reflects on how Islamic teachings are exploited by some Muslim men and women in order to gratify and justify their base desires under the guise of a transcendent sanction. She believes in transformation and firmly believes that it will take place within Senegalese society.

Chapter six entitled *Silence and Madness: An exploration of theme of female exploitation in Bâ's Scarlet Song* is a much darker, more pessimistic novel than *So Long a Letter*. It goes to more complicated depths to pick one's way through racial problems. We are bound to view this novel as reversion to, or variations of the themes of *So Long a Letter* when it comes to the associations of the female protagonist's situations. Ousmane's betrayal led to the ruin of their love and marriage which started with youthful optimism. He insisted Mireille fit herself into his African society through tolerance and submission. Mireille, who left her own country for her love, resisted to African way.

Moreover, Ousmane, who made an excuse for physical pleasure through Islam cultural justification, built a double life with second wife, Ouleymatou. As Ramatoulaye decided to keep

her marriage, Mireille chose to stay. She attributed no greatness to her attitude. Her choice was neither an evasion nor cowardice.

Chapter seven, entitled *Summing Up***,** gathers up various threads and establishes, by way of conclusion, the nature of conflict in the protagonists of Buchi Emecheta and Mariama Bâ. The principal objective of the concluding chapter is to present Emecheta and Bâ's specific view of African women's existence. Emecheta's presents rather a black picture of the society that result in her aggressive approach. On the other hand, Mariama Bâ presents hopes from the younger generation to bring about a change in the society. They go back to the same stratergies to assert that the self-contradictive tradition functioned as an exploiter of women is already submerged in the second generation.

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